

The SL Arts and Life Magazine

R e **Z**

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STRATAKAT

an interview with Jami Mills

Companionability (Part Two)

by Citlalmina Seranno

TANKED

with Gudrun Gausman

Dancing the Night Away

The PG interviews Kaejae Truss

PURE LOGIC

by Catchtye Rumpler

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About the Cover:

Photographer Jami Mills captures the immensely talented Stratakat in his natural habitat, performing in-world and rockin' the Stratocaster with a captivated, adoring audience





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Are You A

STRATEAK

Interview and Photos
by Jami Mills



The guitar is a stringed instrument of the chordophone family constructed from wood and strung with either nylon or steel strings.

Webster's Dictionary, 23rd Edition

George Beauchamp and Stratakat have never met, but they would have been in awe of one another. Back in 1931, Beauchamp did Stratakat a huge favor by developing the first successful electric guitar and launching the electRO-PATin-Instrument Company with Adolph Rickenbacker (yes, *that* Rickenbacker) a year later. And just imagine the look on Beauchamp's face if he could have heard what Stratakat has done with his nifty invention. Of course, we should also tip our hats to Les Paul, who created the first solid body electric guitar, and we can't forget Leo Fender, without whom Stratakat would have needed to choose another name.

For over 80 years, the electric guitar has transformed popular culture like few things have. In the 1960s, Bob Dylan had to beef up his security on stage to protect him from angry fans who found his switch to electric guitar blasphemous. The electric guitar has suffered a great deal of abuse over the years, being splintered into pieces, doused with lighter fluid, burned to ashes – all in the name of Rock 'n' Roll.

Hendrix's performance of *The Star Spangled Banner*, complete with screaming feedback, was quite a shock at the time, but seems rather quaint now.

"He got the action, he got the motion....Oh, yeah, the boy can play"
Walk of Life, Dire Straits

Some critics have faulted the Yamaha musical teaching method for over-emphasizing technique, and we've all had to endure well-meaning and undeniably passionate players who sorely lack the minimal skills to make their music listenable. As with all the arts though, when technique is blended with passion, something special – something transcendent – happens. And it happens every time Stratakat straps on his guitar and hits the stage. Oh, yeah, the boy can play!

JM: *Strat, thank you for taking time out of your busy day to meet with me for this chat. Our readers are going to enjoy this opportunity to get to know you a little better, the man behind the mythic name. When you slip your guitar over your shoulder, you go to another place, don't you? You've mentioned it in your concerts. You've ended songs out of breath and disoriented. Music transports you. Where does it take you?*

SK: That is a very good question. I of-

ten ask myself the same thing. What's amazing is that when I get into this trance-like deal, these notes come flowing off my fingers, and I sometimes don't even remember what I've played until I go back and listen to it. Then I think, "Where the heck were my fingers when I did that?" No doubt I get into a thing that we call the zone! The zone is where I AM the music, completely - - mentally, spiritually, and obviously physically.

the results.

JM: *For those of our readers who haven't yet had the good fortune to have heard you live in SL, you bring a jaw-dropping technical command of your instrument, mix it up with Funk, Rock and Jazz, and just let your raw emotions flow through it all. Let's start with how you got so damn good. When did you start playing guitar and how has your playing has evolved over the years?*

...when I get into this trance-like deal, these notes come flowing off my fingers and I sometimes don't even remember what I've played...

I learned a long time ago that you learn as much as you can about theory and then you forget it all and just play by ear. I love that when I'm playing music, all the stress and troubles of RL are completely gone from my mind, so it's like meditation to me. And it's been years since I've had the opportunity to play to an audience that appreciates improvisation. I'm able to get moved to that place and share it. I have to say, it is the spirits and souls out there listening to me that take me deeper and deeper into that zone. But where is it actually? I have no idea, but I sure like

SK: Funny as it is, I have always loved the guitar as far back as I can remember. I was nine years old, onstage, singing and pretending to play guitar. In those days people used to have cigar boxes, so my dad made a pretend guitar out of a cigar-box. I was in 3rd grade up onstage singing *I Want to Hold Your Hand* and also *The Crooked Little Man*. One year later we were heading to England and we stopped at one of my dad's uncle's houses, and all the adults were sitting around playing guitar. When they were done I asked if I could play guitar and he said yeah. They were in

the other room and within a few minutes I had figured out how to play a song called *Walking the Strings* and another song called *Hava Nagila*. They all came in and asked, "How did you do that?" I only learned the melody, so I guess I've always been drawn to melody ... a great melody is always great.

really well. He showed me the blues scale and the blues progression. He knew a bunch of Led Zeppelin and Hendrix songs and showed all those to me. We sat around all summer and all we did was play guitar for like 18 hours a day for three months. I remember playing *All Along the Watchtower* for hours on end.



When I was 13, I could play better than any other 13-year-old I knew, but by the time I was 15, I had gotten bored with guitar, as I could only keep playing the same old stuff. I still played around with a guitar, but I had lost that drive. But then a year later, at 16, I met a guy who was 17 who played guitar

It was after that summer I realized all I wanted to do was play guitar, but I couldn't seem to learn what music was. I found out years later, that only 30 miles away in Santa Barbara was a guitar player named Joe Pass. And he was teaching at a little music store there. If only my parents could have taken me

to ONE lesson with him. But back then only a handful of people knew who he was, yet he ended up being one of the most celebrated jazz guitar players ever. Only he was straight ahead pure jazz, not Hendrix stuff, but still, if only I could have met him when I was 13 or so. It's a huge word, that word "IF."

When I was 19 I moved to Ohio and found this little jazz school where I was able to finally study jazz with a bass player who used to play bass for Wes Montgomery. He was so strict. I remember the first lesson; he made me memorize my 1, 3, 5, 7 in all 12 keys. I came back the next week and he says, "Okay, so what is the 1, 3, 5 of A flat. I said "Well, I'm not really sure but I'll know it by next week." He says "Nope, that'll be \$10. I'll see you next week when you know it." Needless to say, the next week I knew 1, 3, 5, 7 in all 12 keys and still know them to this day.

Because I couldn't afford to go to music school, I joined the Army so I could get the GI Bill and get my college paid for. And that's what I did. I did my time and then went straight back to Columbus, Ohio and started on my degree in Jazz Guitar, where I got straight As. With one semester left to get my bachelors in jazz performance, I left college for a very strange reason. I didn't think that having a piece of paper that said I was a Jazz guitar player meant anything if I couldn't play jazz the way I felt it

should be played. I needed to have real experience. This is where I started my journey of paying my dues so I could let my playing say I was a Guitar Player. I learned a ton in college, but it was a very difficult time for me, as I didn't have any money or any family. All I had was a handful of friends that were just as broke as me, but it gave me a grounded starting point to continue learning.

From there, I went on to start a band called *Third Planet* and I continued playing in bands for the next 20 years until I was about 40. It was then that I got into writing software and started buying CDs from everybody. I have over 850 CDs of over 650 different guitar players. Anyone and everyone who played guitar that I could find, I have their CD. I loaded all those songs into my computer and while I sat and wrote code/software, sometimes 18 to 20 hours a day, I'd put my music player on random and listen to these songs over and over and over.

And now that I've found Second Life, I have a way-cool reason to learn even more. I hope this didn't bore you too much. There is more, but I've got to stop somewhere.

JM: *On the contrary. That's a fascinating story. You certainly seem driven by something within. Many musicians have someone who has profoundly affected*

them, maybe inspired them to not only pick up an instrument, but to master it. Is there such a figure for you?

SM: When I would listen to other guitarists, I started to realize, "Wow, there's nothing these guys are doing

rique Iglesias. There was no way this guy would ever teach guitar, but I went to look him up anyway, found his website www.greghowe.com, and right across the top it said "Guitar Lessons." I couldn't believe it. I called and asked if it was true (did he really give guitar les-

...blues licks are the heart of any good solo. And the blues is as American as any music ever created.

that I can't do," except for one guy. One guy's guitar playing stood out from that whole group of 800+ CDs, and I thought, "What the heck is he doing?" He was doing stuff that seemed physically impossible to me. (Hehe, it's some of the same stuff I do today, thanks to his help.) I thought, "You know what? Maybe I should take a guitar lesson to see if I still have it -- or maybe I should just quit thinking about guitar all together." I was 49 years old and I wanted to go back to school, but I wanted to learn from the very best. If I could study from one person out this group of guitar players, who would it be?

Well, it had to be that one guy whose playing I could never figure out -- Greg Howe. I figured he's just way too famous, playing with Michael Jackson, NSYNC, Justin Timberlake, and En-

sons?) and his manager answered, "Absolutely!" So I asked her what he charged, and she said "Well, it's \$75 an hour unless you take two or more hours and then it's \$50." I said, "Okay, I'll take eight hours." She replied, "Oh, I don't know. If you do, do you mean like over four days?" I told her, "No, I mean all in one day" and set up a time to fly out to Pennsylvania for an eight-hour lesson.

We sat there and talked for a few minutes and it was like I knew this guy my whole life. I remember seeing him in *Guitar Player* magazine in the late 80s holding that Fender Stratocaster, as he was the icon of Fender back then. We went down to his studio to take my lesson, he puts on some music. He soloed a little, then I soloed a little, and he soloed, then me. We played for

about 10 minutes, he stopped the music and looked at me and asked, "Why the hell are you taking guitar lessons?" I'll never forget how bad I felt. I asked him, "Really, am I that bad?" He said, "Are you kidding me? You play some of the coolest jazz bebop lines I've ever heard. You don't need lessons, you just need to play." I explained to him that I had all these CDs and I'd been studying all my life. I majored in jazz guitar in college, but he was able to do things that I couldn't figure out, things that seemed to be impossible. He laughed and said, "I know what you're talking about. You're talking about my hammer-ons from nowhere." And he played

a few of them and that is exactly what I was talking about. It took me about two years to be able to play them once he showed me. So I felt like a kid who went back to school. It really put the fire back in my life for playing guitar. Needless to say, Greg Howe has been the biggest influence in my life when it comes to putting the icing on the cake, so to speak. He also reminded me that my blues licks are the heart of any good solo. And the blues is as American as any music ever created. I truly owe my playing progress over the last eight years to Greg! I got to study with the best guitar player on the planet, and it was kind of like getting my doctorate degree in fusion guitar. And I'm just getting started.



JM: Most of your material is instrumental, although you throw some vocals in your sets from time to time. I overheard one listener say, "Who needs vocals when you can play like that?" You'd better have your chops together to carry an entire set instrumentally. Our friend Voodoo Shilton can do it, but I'm struggling to think of many more who can. How do you like to use vocals in your music?

SK: Actually I use vocals more for an effect than to try to display any type of singing talent because I honestly don't think

I have any singing talent whatsoever; that's why I learned to play guitar, so I didn't have to sing (laughs). Although in college I did have to take a bunch of formal vocal lessons and if I really put my mind to it, I can do some pretty strange things with my voice. The thing

every geeky effect that you could ever want, but while taking my lessons with Greg Howe, I brought my cool little pedal box and I plugged it in and Greg played his guitar straight to the app with a microphone in front of the speaker - - no effects (okay maybe a

...so really every song to me is just a canvas for me to throw paint at - - and I paint with notes.

I like to do the most is "scat." That's where basically I play bebop sounds with the same notes I'm playing on the guitar (or I try to) - - kind of like what George Benson made famous back in the 70s. And I think as I do this more often, you'll hear a lot more scat singing when I do my jazz stuff. But real singing? I'm going to leave that for the people who use their voice as their instrument.

JM: Now I want you to promise not to hold back on me. Our readers are very sophisticated and always want to know about the technical aspects of your performances: guitars, amps, pedals, mics, effects, manufacturers, etc. Please describe your rig and feel free to totally geek out.

SK: It's actually kind of funny. There was a time when I had every pedal and

little delay).

And Greg proved to me that there is no better tone than a guitar straight to the amp. Now that may seem a little funny, but that's really all I do - - play the guitar straight to the amp. Something about moving air and capturing that with a microphone, there is still no electronic gadget that sounds as good as a guitar mic'd straight to a good amp, and when you're a guitar purist, that's the sound and tone we all shoot for. I have another cabinet showing up pretty soon, so my tone should get a little bit better. I just bought something called an ISO cab. It's where the microphone and speaker are enclosed and I can turn it up without waking up the neighbors. Basically, I use a little bit of delay, tiny bit of reverb and the rest is all guitar.

JM: *My favorite song of yours is your powerful arrangement of "The Pump," by Jeff Beck. I know most guitarists don't want to be considered in the same breath as Beck, but after listening to both of your versions back to back, Beck's version seems rather subdued compared to yours. Your arrangement is more like the bruising version by Steve Lukather (of Toto fame) and jazz great, Larry Carlton. Please describe how you incorporate your jazz sensibilities into power rock tunes.*

SK: I really don't know where to start to answer this question. There are so many great guitar players and I think at

some point in time, you learn all you can and then you just play. I got to study from one of Hollywood's greatest composers, a guy named Dick Grove. Dick Grove proved to us that with a little bit of thought and some rhythmic creativity, any note can go to any other note, any chord can go from any chord to any other chord; so I seem to have this inborn theory that there are no rules. I grew up on Jimi Hendrix and graduated to Greg Howe, so really every song to me is just a canvas for me to throw paint at -- and I paint with notes. I love doing the unexpected as often as I can, and my paints are many and colorful. (Notes that is)... probably too many notes. But it sure is fun.



JM: *Greg produced your first CD, "No Rules." You self-financed the entire project, but this is the part I want everyone to know about: you're giving away the CD on your website www.stratakat.com. It doesn't get any purer than that. People are on the honor system to donate what they can afford. I'd like to encourage all of our readers to check out this CD and, if they*

like it, make a generous contribution to your musical devotion. You mention that it took you seven years to make "No Rules" a reality. How much fun was it to make it?

SK: I can't tell you in words what making this CD was like, but I'll try. Greg is just one amazing human being. He has become one of my very best friends. We may not talk to each other for three or six months, then we'll talk every day for three weeks. The most fun was looking forward to making the CD and every chance I got to work on it, I'd take it. Greg was and is a very busy man, so I was totally on his schedule. As it started to come to an end, it was almost sad, as I didn't have those days when we would be getting together in my near future. But I learned SO much from creating this project. I had no idea how guys would transfer their

playing skills into songs. And I was able to see it first hand - - not only how a master player like Greg played, but how he created the canvases of sound to play over. It will go down as one of the most special accomplishments in my life. Even when I finish the next CD, it will not compare to the 'No Rules' project. And it really does stand for its title, as I truly play with no rules and the songs have no set style or genre they follow. I just hope people hear the passion and devotion to guitar and music I hold in my heart.

JM: Some of your sets seem like one long dream, where the solo isn't a portion of the song, it IS the song. You love improvisation.

SK: When I learned to play, it was all about being able to play the solos of the song. And the solos were always way



too short for my liking. Then I learned jazz - - and jazz is all about creating a NEW melody over the chords of the song. So now I get to play a solo for the whole song, if I choose. Like I said in

times, it can often lead to an emotional disconnect with the listener. Your technical skills are so outstanding, how do you make sure you maintain that emotional connection?

...but there should also be some moments that make you think "H__y S__t"! What was that?

my show last night, "I feel as a jazz musician, I have the authority to play the melody or not play the melody." And that makes what I do very special, even to me. I just hope my audience gets that aspect of my playing. I'm there to create, not play the same thing over and over; and with that, there may be a questionable note here and there, but there should also be some moments that make you think "H__y S__t! What was that?" I know I do. I loved every note and mistake Jimi Hendrix ever played. I like to just utilize every style to express things that are new. I'm pretty sure no other guitar player on the planet is playing an instrumental version of *Atomic Dog*. Okay, maybe, but none that I've ever heard.

JM: There have been many technically astounding guitarists. Al Dimeola, Johnny Winter, Joe Satriani (listen to his Flight of the Bumblebee sometime). But while technique can be dazzling some-

SK: Well, this is a GREAT question. I'm not so sure I do connect as much as I hope to. I would think I use the technical aspect of my playing for FX more than just the total sound, and I really do think in melodic terms, as in a song like *Just Like Heaven* by The Cure. I've always loved that song, and when I play that melody, I'm feeling it as if I'm singing the lyrics. When it gets to the part where the lyrics are saying "I'll run away with you," I know (hope) every person listening is hearing the words in their heads. If I do actually connect as you are suggesting, I would hope it's because of the melodic approach I apply to every song - - that and the Tension/Release I alluded to above. I hope to GRIND, grind, grind on your nerves. Then just when you think "Okay, I've had enough of this," I release that into something very inside musically and soothing to your ear. I know I'm still working on that a lot.

I can name a thousand players on YouTube and in recordings that play faster than me and have way more technique than I'll ever have. I know of an 11-year old girl that outplays me, but there is one thing I never, ever totally move away from, and that's the blues. I throw in blues notes in places you just wouldn't expect, and it's such a familiar sound that can be both tension and release in the same one note. I also love every musician and guitar player on the planet. I learn from the kid who's been playing for three months, and the guys that have been playing their whole lives. I love every style of music and every note that's ever been played. I spent a whole chapter (okay, about three months) studying Dixie and red-neck music, just for the fast staccato

doubt the reason I have to work so hard outside of music, as I was broke all my life until I put down the guitar in 1997 to learn computer programming.

I really thought I would never ever play guitar again, but what happened was I made enough money to buy every CD from every player I could find. It was then that I realized I was just getting started, and now I look at Johnny and Al as peers (well, sort of - - they'll always be my idols). Now that's exciting! Greg once told me, "Strat, you have more chops than Joe will ever have, but you need to learn to control them." And that's what I'm doing now, and SL is totally giving me the opportunity to learn to control something that I thought was lost. When I went out to

There was barely the spark of a flame left for music, and [Greg Howe] totally poured pure high-octane gasoline on that flame.

vibe that they possess. You mentioned Al and Johnny. I used to spend days upon days playing just one lick from them and of all the guys you actually mentioned, Johnny Winters was my all-time favorite back when I was like 15, as he played so fast and furious, but also never strayed from the blues. It's no

take that lesson from Greg, there was barely the spark of a flame left for music, and he totally poured pure high-octane gasoline on that flame. Now I wish I could quit programming and just play guitar, but through all the dreams I'm still a realist and I'm just glad and feel privileged to be able to

play guitar. The honor is always mine when I do get the opportunity to play.

JM: Are there any musical areas you haven't explored yet but yearn to? You are working on your second CD now. What direction are you going to take in it? What's next for Stratakat?

SK: Tough question! Of course, I have still never toured overseas or been able to enjoy sharing this gift with those in South America, Europe, Australia, Russia, Japan, China ... all over. But with SL, I just may be able to get to that dream, and all from the comfort of my home studio. I would LOVE to put together a big band, with horns, sax section, trombones, and a full rhythm section, and be able to blow Hendrix/Satriani-style solos with that kind of a band. I've always wanted to score some movies, and a TV show like *CSI*. I would love to score that show. I know I'll be lucky to be able to play another ten years at this level, so I also know my time is coming to an end soon. So as I said earlier, if I were to be sent into the afterlife today, I've had a great ride.

As for my second CD, I'm really not sure how I'm going to pull that off. The plan is to put out 33 songs. 11 will be Jazz Standards, Stratified to the HILT. 11 will be along the lines of the *No Rules* format, and the final 11 will be hopefully from a place I haven't yet

found, but if I don't get the RL work thing balanced soon, it may just be a dream.

JM: What do you enjoy the most about your SL concerts? Is it difficult to bridge the virtual divide and connect with your audiences? It sure seems like it's effortless for you, and I can assure you, your audiences are thoroughly enthralled with your performances.

SK: I have to say what I enjoy the most are the people, and how well I've been received, and right there with that is the freedom to play what's in my heart. I've spent a lifetime learning how to improvise and solo and that's all I do -- I start a track and solo for several minutes. I read Voodoo saying, "Damn, Strat, you never seem to run out of ideas," and I have to say there are nights I feel like I'm doing just that. But then I hear it back and think "Where the hell were my fingers on that lick or that phrase?"

The people here in SL have made me feel so at home, I'm actually a bit sad that I don't get to spend more time here talking and hanging with everyone, but I hope they understand that I have such a full life outside of SL that it truly is amazing that I get to play here at all. I'm really praying and working as hard as I can to get more and more time to play here. I want shows in all time zones, too. I just played for the Aus-

tralian time zone and I thought it was a bit over the top for them, but when I was done, I guess they got it and wanted more, but 2:00 a.m. is a bit tough when you have to get up at 4:30 the next day. So it's on my thoughts daily. "How can I JUST play guitar?" I know we've all paid our dues in one way or another, but I really didn't think I would be where I am today. Nothing pleases me more than playing guitar, but believe it or not, very, very few people in my RL have a clue I play at all. It's really quite sad, and even funny. I'm praying that will change soon!

JM: Thank you for this wonderful interview, Strat. This might be the most honest, heartfelt interview I've ever had. I thank you so much for opening your heart and soul to our readers. You brought to this interview the same personal intensity you bring to each of your performances. Thank you so very much for that. Before we leave, is there anything you'd like to share with our readers about what it takes to be a Stratakat?

SK: Actually, I've probably said too much here already. I can't thank you enough for finding what I do something you feel will be interesting to the rez readers. If I could request one thing, it would be to ask everyone to please get my CD and share it with everyone you know. I'm more interested in pointing people to the great players of our era, like Scott Hender-

son, Greg Howe, Alan Holdsworth. And if my crazy style and *NO RULES* approach can shed a little light on other great players, then I'm doing all I can to help use music as a way to keep people thinking positively. Then everyone will be able to be a total Stratakat, loving the music that is made from a Stratocaster.

Thank you Leo Fender, you've made my life worth living. And thank you, Jami. I hope I didn't bore anyone.



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Companion

(Part Two)

by Citlalmina Sera



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nno



They can then say, as the blessed souls say in Dante, "Here comes one who will augment our loves." --C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*

In the last issue, part one of this article ("Companionability" March 2013) described the Registered Companion from Joss Whedon's *Firefly* television series, the *Firefly* Companion's Guild in Second Life, and High Priestess Varahi Lusch's expansion of that idea into something more than just a roleplaying character class. A common reaction, though, is that Companions are still nothing more than escorts in spaceships.

Firefly consistently showed that Companions are respected and honored by the worthy members of society, and characters on the show who call the Registered Companion Inara Serra a whore earn contempt – and sometimes beatings – from those around them. Despite the canon, some people in Second Life enjoy calling those who play Companion "whores," excusing the insult as "roleplay" but refusing to accept any consequence.

Inara clearly does charge for her services. Like the hetaerae, courtesans, oiran, and others throughout history, the Companions in the show are prostitutes with high social standing; however, the word is simply incorrect when applied to the Companions of

Varahi's Guild in Second Life. They do not accept payment for their services, whether or not sex is included.

(Another meaning of "whore" – "a woman the speaker feels contempt for and wishes to hurt" – is of course a statement about the speaker, not the Companion.)

Their education and training helps members of the Companion's Guild become skilled in "emoting" – creating evocative descriptions of their perceptions and actions, in addition to direct dialog. Any Companion would be able to earn a pleasant income if she were to work as an escort, but instead they provide their valuable services without charge – a significant difference between the Companions of the Guild and the ones in the television series.

More like real-world geisha, Second Life Companions are taught to avoid the subject of money with guests. A Companion never asks for money and if a guest pays her, she will return the lindens immediately. Money is handled only by "mama-san" – the High Priestess. (Donations toward the monthly Land Use "Tier" Fee for the Guild's estate are welcome just as they would be for nearly every other estate in Second Life, but those can be paid into tip jars around Dakini Land.)

Each Companion has different motiva-

tions to give their love freely, but many simply enjoy intimate relationships, sexual and otherwise, and find that payment would diminish the warm friendship. Many log into Second Life with no goals more complicated than fun and frolic. Involving payments would not add to their pleasure and quite possibly create disagreements that would interfere with the fun.

Even those who take their Second Lives more seriously find that money mixes business with friendship in an uncomfortable way, introducing ideas of obligation and entitlement. Commerce brings with it ideas of “fairness” that

the Companion’s limits. Those limits can be roleplaying or sexual, but also can be both practical and emotional. Very few Companions seek long-term relationships outside the Guild. Companions have real lives, just as their guests do, which often means their time in Second Life is limited. Encounters are, therefore, scheduled and have specified durations.

When a request for an Encounter leaves a Companion with doubts or questions, she may ask for a “pre-booking interview” to clarify. The Priestesses often support newer Companions this way; more experienced Compan-

Each Companion has different motivations to give their love freely, but many simply enjoy intimate relationships, sexual or otherwise

many people instinctively feel strongly about, even if they don’t put their feelings into the language of legal contracts. If the client has already paid, or even if he has agreed to pay later after the services have been provided, the Companion has yielded control of the relationship to her “employer.”

Companions know the importance of that control. Regrettably, some guests do not understand the nature of the Companion, and some do not respect

ions are assumed to be able to take care of themselves most of the time, though they are welcome to request a formal interview if they feel it will help. Unfamiliar guests requesting BDSM-related activities, for example, are often interviewed.

The rules and the structured Encounter process – this ritual – ensure that the Encounter will not involve activities that are not fun for both the Companion and the guest. Together with the re-

removal of money, these procedures allow Companions to relax and, if they choose, to take the Encounter deeper than the surface of the roleplaying event, to make it something emotionally special to both.

Those who immerse deeply in the virtual worlds find real emotions can be involved, and the most powerful is love. The word “love” is often used to mean desire and attachment, where the



“beloved” is expected to feel and to do things for the “lover.” It can refer to infatuation, a feeling of intoxication in which the emotion overwhelms rationality. These meanings are frequently celebrated in art.

Another meaning, though, is a simple offering from the lover to the beloved, without expectation. “Gift-love” is not intoxicating, but is aware, mindful, relaxed, and happy. It makes no demands of the beloved. This meaning has spiritual connotations – it's the agape used in Christian theology – but certainly isn't limited to religious use. Robert Heinlein had his character Jubal Harshaw, who is described as a “devout agnostic” in *Stranger in a Strange Land*, define love as “that condition in which the happiness of another person is essential to your own.”

Many Companions find real-world satisfaction in learning, understanding, and fulfilling their guest's desires. That service is their joy. Some actively seek to love their guests – to realize that they are important and their happiness matters. This kind of love is not itself an emotion – it is a decision – but it brings with it emotions of joy and bliss. To these Companions, it is delightful when the

guest reciprocates, but it is not necessary – even if the guest does not understand the Companion's choice and feelings, he will be aware of the special nature of the Encounter, one very different from a contractual, commercial transaction. These Companions find that the online roleplay of a Registered Companion supports their real-world beliefs and principles. They find that they are no longer playing a game, pretending to care – nor are they practicing a profession, because there is no quid pro quo. For them, acting as a Companion, providing help and joy, is a vocation.

The prohibition on charging for their services and turning the Encounter into a business deal, the fencing off of the Encounter with defined limits, the procedures that allow Companions to choose guests whom they can trust, all allow Companions to give their love, to

with their own talents at description and dialog to provide unique experiences for their guests. Many go to some effort to create actual spaces, locations and furnishings, that support and outline the Encounters they create. These spaces vary as much as the Companions do; some take their cues from the *Firefly* shows and operate out of a spacecraft while others build structures. Their architecture may be impressive and permanent buildings such as those on the island of Dakini Land or they may prefer the intimacy of ephemeral and private spaces.

When freely-given love is the motivation, the Companion will naturally do her best to understand her guest and do what she can to fulfill his desires, to wish him happiness. With that motivation, the unique experience of an Encounter can become transcendental, something separate from the guest's or-

“Gift-love” is not intoxicating, but is aware, mindful, relaxed, and happy

practice their vocation and their art.

More than any debating of definitions, that art differentiates the Companion. All Companions are adept at using the features of Second Life – images, music, animation, and so on – together

binary Second Life experience. Whatever framing environment she chooses to work in, her craft can rise to the level hierotopy, the creation of a sacred space.

Once the Encounter itself begins and

the Companion brings the guest into her space, from the moment he sees her dressed to meet him, perhaps playing her musical instrument while she has been waiting. When he sees the implements of the tea ceremony, the guest will feel that he has left his usual reality, transported to a space separated from the mundane world. From that beginning, the ritual of the Encounter will vary to suit the guest in a flow that will inspire his trust and put him at ease. The measured transitions between the Enjoyments will inspire the confidence that what is happening is not just right, but inevitable. The final transition deserves special attention. The beginning of the Encounter – the shuttle's lift-off, the departure from the mundane world – is exhilarating. But just as much, after every transcendence, however exalted, comes reentry, the return to the mundane world.

A “service provider” with a price, motivated by profit, might correctly be called a whore. She would have a timer going and would end the session reckoning the payment – even if it were only the expected donation to the tip jar. A Companion motivated by love will still have limits and finite time to give, but she will be able to return her guest from the transcendental swoon of experience to his mundane life with love and compassion. The Encounter will be a little like a dream, perhaps leaving him unable to communicate

quite what his experience was like to others who were not there, but his awaking will be gentle. It won't be to the sound of payment transfer.

So Companions don't charge, and some give reasons beyond simply not wanting to be whores. That alone does not make them special. In the final reckoning, what is unique about Varahi's Guild? Agape and hierotopy are noble ideas, but can they really exist in Second Life? Or are Companions just self-justifying escorts, dressing up their lust for cybersex in kimono and role-play?

The opposing disclaimers of the two avatars this exploration began with in part one represent two extreme ways of existing in Second Life. The one who does not like “fakes” uses Second Life as a service, a set of computer programs, clients and servers and networks, to make real-world connections – voice to voice, perhaps even real body to real body. That is a true description of what Second Life is. Its functions support forming real-world relationships. Users tending toward this extreme often go to some effort to minimize the effect of the virtual world and emphasize the real.

That use is valid, but probably not the most common one. Many people use Second Life to create new forms, new environments, new experiences, rather

than extensions of their “real” ones. Second Life provides more varied ways for us to use our avatars to allow minds to meet without involving our real-world bodies.

Those who enjoy understanding the systems of Second Life become builders and scripters, and create more beautiful and intricate, more involving experiences for others.

Those who enjoy the skills of avatar design, making fine adjustments to attachments, and precise movement and posing (and love wearing beautiful clothes), become fashion models and show designers' craft to potential buyers. Those who like to collaborate with friends in creating stories become roleplayers.

A true description of Second Life is that it is a set of virtual worlds; it functions to allow its users to create immersive environments. Many people use the virtual world to bypass the obstacles imposed by mundane reality, and many go toward the other extreme,

putting some effort toward keeping mundane reality out of the picture, focusing on the virtual – and some take the middle, between the extremes.

The one who understands and embraces the reality that we live in multiple worlds and can unite the virtual and the real, the two truths....



That's the Companion.

Citlalmina Seranno joined the Companion's Guild in September 2010 and was given the name Fā-Le Yán when she Registered in November 2011.

• r — e — z •

photography

jami mills



RUNAROUND

Established in 8
Click Ball To Dance -

Dancing in
with Harry Bailey

an interview wi



the Night



with Kaeja Truss

SPRING! Yes, it is finally here and we have moved beyond April showers into the May flowers of life. One of the marvelous wonders of SL is that we can choose to avoid those showers completely while we decorate our surroundings from any variety of flowers and plant life. We seemingly miss the excitement that comes with the renewal of this season.

For this reason I thought this month we might begin with that old early spring joy of the dance around the Maypole. Colorful streamers and a dozen people each dancing in a group around that central point to welcome the season of renewal and rebirth.

I have enjoyed being a part of several group dance troupes across SL. From the now mostly gone "Funky Feats" group that began as a NY city chorus line, led by the long lost avatar NY Nan, that then morphed into the Daily Dose and then on into Footloose dancers, which lives on.

Yet the most original and enjoyable group dancing I have found is led by a quite amazing dance impresario, Kaejae Truss. KJ has amassed the largest collection of anything I know of across SL --- her collection of singles dances. She has a loyal following of dance groupies and works to match any song thrown at her from any DJ. She dances most of the time with DJ BigJack Rolls,

and they make quite a team.

I managed to grab her off the dance floor for a few minutes to talk with her about her dances and the joy she experiences by leading groups of dancers across SL.

HB: Welcome. First of all, thanks for letting me interview you for rez. Kaejae, let's begin with how you got into being the dance master of SL.

KJ: After I got my SL feet on the ground, I started visiting various clubs. I started out in country but after awhile I drifted to others. I ended up at Sue's.

HB: Yes, I think I recall first meeting you over at Sue's.

KJ: Being shy, I would go watch others from the corner, where I learned about the Huddles EZ hud, and bought one. Being new at it, I just bought a few dances that I liked and would dance by myself in the corner. I was very shy in RL also.

HB: Do you remember what those first dances you started with were?

KJ: You kidding? I've been in SL since March 2006

HB: That is quite an SL lifetime.

KJ: I've met a lot of people, but for a



long time I used my hud just for my own dancing. At the time I wasn't dancing to match the music.

Then I met Rev (Kae-

jae's longtime SL friend). He and his friend were dancing when they invited me to dance and he showed me how to invite people using the hud. I also met Jack (DJ BigJack Rolls), who coaxed me out of the corner to meet others. I then started going to his shows. Jack is a great DJ to lead dances for because of the great variety he plays.

HB: You and Jack have become quite a team across SL. He does seem to work to challenge you with his reverse version of "Stump the Band." Yet you always seem to find the perfect dance for any tune he throws at you.

KJ: I was aware of my dancing and realized I needed more dances to keep up with the various beats Jack plays. So I started buying dances. Then I learned about MOCAP dances and now stick mostly to those.

HB: What is a MOCAP dance? Is that a vendor or animator?

KJ: Motion Capture. That is where a person is wired and a computer captured his movements. That is why MOCAP dances look so realistic.

HB: Sounds much more realistic. And now you dance with Jack across SL?

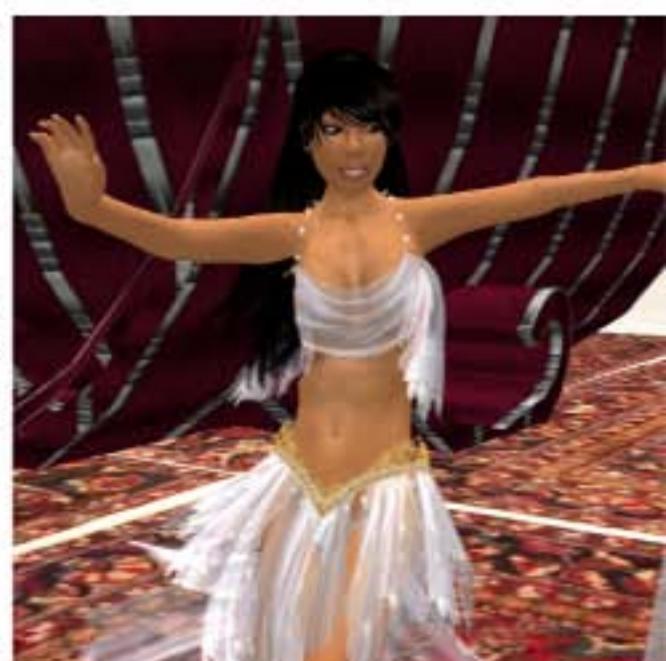
KJ: My real beginnings as a dance leader began with Jack. Jack DJs four nights a weekand he plays everything from Doowop to the silly. I stick with Jack's shows and venture out on the nights he does not play

HB: So where does one find you on those four nights you work with Jack? I know Friday nights are at Runaround Sue's.

KJ: Tuesday is at Blue Note, Wednesday is at Doowops Forever 50s Diner (that's Jules club), Sunday is at Winddragon Isle Angel's club. Those are all with Jack.

HB: Do you ever dance with other DJs?

KJ: Mondays I started dancing at Motor City Dance Club, which is Motown. The owner is DJ John Manx. Thursday night I dance



for Jules at Doowops Forever.

HB: *So how many dances are you up to at this point?*

KJ: At this moment I have 2,371 dances.

HB: *I must say you do work hard to keep all your dancers happy and involved in the group evening. That is one very nice thing about dancing alongside of you, a great place for shy and single people in SL to dance and feel included. :) FunkyHouse sounds like it would work very well with the Motown sound.*



HB: *Sounds like six nights a week some weeks. As I calculate it, if you danced seven non-repeating dances each night six nights a week it would still take you a year to go through them all!*

KJ: Haha, and I'm still on the lookout for dances. The more variety the better. It keeps my dancers happy.

HB: *Do you have a favorite?*

KJ: It's hard to say. At this moment, I have a series called "FunkyHouse." Those are great...a lot of variety in moves.

KJ: Yes, it's medium to fast pace.

HB: *What is the largest number of dancers you have ever hosted on your hud in an evening?*

KJ: Right now I have 35 slots ... the most I've had was around 24. I currently use the Barre Hud. Both the Huddles EZ and Barre allows for a large number of dances and about 50 dancers.

HB: *I know when I danced at Funky Feats, they had all synced dance balls on the floor to keep them all in place. You*

allow your dancers to move and dance as they like. Have you ever considered stationary dance balls?

KJ: I don't like dance balls. Dance balls are too constricting. I want the dancers to dance comfortably and just enjoy themselves. People who like to line up, do so.

HB: *So you have a goal, get up to 50 dancers! Now with the Barre hud and almost 2,400 dances how does that work? Is it menu and sub-menu driven, or is your memory just amazing?*

KJ: I tell people, I throw a dart to pick dances. I learn dances by creator.

HB: *Must be a very good dart since you always match the music and tempo.*

KJ: Some creators' dances are on the slow side.

HB: *Ah, so each dance creator has their own style?*

KJ: Yes, in a way. One creator's dances are very countryish, another's tend to be mostly fast. Some name their dances according to the type of dance (i.e., mambo, rock, etc.) Those are helpful. A

lot of creators have dances named after the dancers. Those dancers have their own style.

HB: *I know you even have Chicken Dance, Conga Line and Macarena.*

KJ: Yes, and bunny hop - - even dances that are for specific dances like "Grease", Kung Foo, etc. The conga is fun ... the people have to move their avi to follow the leader.

HB: *Yes, and that also helps newcomers feel a part of the group, I think. I know you never put out a tip jar at any of the events where you lead the dancing, so how do you manage to afford your magnificent collection of dances?*

KJ: I don't like making people feel like they need to tip me. Those are for the DJ and hostesses, but my regulars and some new dancers tip me directly. I do manage to get enough for dances.



HB: *A very unique and wonderful outlook on tipping in any life I think. I am glad your dancers recognize the joy and value you bring to SL. Unique and wonderful.*

KJ: I'm just happy to make them happy. Have you ever tried to dance a fast dance to slow music? That's why I'm not too crazy about dancing on club dance balls.

HB: *Oh, I hate it when the dance does not match the beat of the music! Like fingernails on a chalkboard!*

KJ: Hehe ... For me too.

HB: *Do you also have ethnic dances for those from around the globe who dance with you?*

KJ: I have a lot of Latin, Gypsy, Hawaiian, Greek, Irish, etc..

HB: *So, where does your dancing go from here?*

KJ: I do a lot of coaching for people who ask. I have a notecard of dance vendors I use. I'm open to questions and help. I'm currently helping someone new to using huds.

HB: *How many dance vendors are there in SL?*

KJ: A lot. Some have come and gone. I

have a notecard of vendors I keep updated to share when people ask. I try to keep it updated and visit the vendors at least once a week to see if they have any new dances.

HB: *I count 15 vendors on your list. Hopefully, the list will continue to grow.*

KJ: Want some tips? First, get to know the creators and get a feel for the type of dance beats they use. You don't need to know each dance individually except the ones named specifically for a dance. Another thing that is important: watch yourself dance. When I start a dance, I watch myself. That tells me if I am matching the song. There are times that Jack will pick songs for specific dances I have. That makes it fun also ... like the Limbo, Swim, etc. It surprises new people that a dance can be that specific.

HB: *Kaejae, I think that is one of the joys people find when dancing with you, the surprise factor of new dances and fun dances. The way you and Jack work together is quite an evening's experience.*

KJ: Jack likes to talk between dances. I use a standing or swaying animation to stay with the feel of the dance floor with no music playing. Jack is fun to



lead dances for because of his variety. I even have kid type dances for when he plays songs like the Muppets. When dancing on my hud, it frees dancers to enjoy the conversations.



HB: This has been a most wonderful afternoon interviewing you :) I don't want to take all your time, but are there any last things you would like to share?

KJ: Wonder why I don't wear a dress very often?

HB: Now that you mention that, I had noticed that. Why don't you wear a dress more often?

KJ: In order to see how the dance looks, I wear pants or short skirts. You can't see how your legs are moving under a dress and that is important in dancing. With some dances, your knees swerve.

HB: WOW! As a male always in pants, I had never considered that!

KJ: Next time you go to a dance, look at women in long dresses. You see them move but you can't see the details of their moves, so you'll always see me in pants or short skirts.

HB: I certainly will! I have to say that running into you, probably at one of Sue's Friday night events, has certainly been a joy in my SL! Dancing alongside of you is one of the best entertainments around for couples or singles.

KJ: Thanks.

As all of you wind your way across SL, try to find the time to hop in on one of Kaejae's fun evenings of dancing and group great conversation. This is a great way to enjoy dancing, partner or no partner, as it frees you from the work of selecting and changing the dances with each song. That leaves a lot more attention to focus on the fun! And if you run into this Perfect Gentleman out on the floor doing the Bunny Hop or the Chicken Dance, have your camera ready. Those shots add to the blackmail stories and photos you can add into your inventory! Dance away and enjoy your May!

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What's Your Issue?

a monthly advice column by
Gudrun Gausman

Dear Gudrun -

Life is great when your career, relationships, and everything else are going forward. But what do you do when these things start to stagnate, or worse, go backwards? Or when your energy and enthusiasm levels drop? During my last employee evaluation, my boss said I seemed "unmotivated." How do you get your life and career back on track? And, can Second Life help you do this?

Sincerely,
Tanked

Dear Tanked -

You can get back on track, and Second Life can help you do it. The rules are basically the same. You can use SL as a barometer of the effectiveness of strategies and tactics, and then you can employ them without fear. And it's lots cheaper than RL in every conceivable way. These really aren't strategies or tactics so much as an overall philosophy of life.

Always be honest - You cannot lie to yourself, and you cannot continuously live in an attempt to please others. (This does not mean you have to reveal your complete RL self in SL.)

"The truth is more important than the facts."

Frank Lloyd Wright (1868-1959)

Express only your desires, not what you don't want. Being negative works like instructions that tell people what not to do - those are the ones they follow - so don't say what you don't want.

Focus on the goal beyond the goal - Winning a game is accomplished one goal at a time, but the ultimate goal is to win the entire game, not just to score.

Never say "I can't," because where there is a will, there is a way. You always have choice, which gives you power. Feeling that you can't is disempowering. Be patient, persistent and determined. Never give up on your dreams and desires, and never give in to disappointment or defeat. Keep taking the next step toward your goal, and if what you are doing is not working, try something else.

"If you are going through hell, keep going."

Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965)

Step into the life you want - Act as if and dress as if you are who you want to be.

Dress for success - Wear clothes that accentuate your best features and make you feel good about yourself. This will

help you to exude confidence. (Shopping is one of the main attractions in SL, and there are plenty of freebies.)

Act like a winner - Like attracts like (i.e., other winners). Do not admit defeat. Be confident (but not cocky or arrogant). It's the number one thing that people find attractive.

"Being defeated is often a temporary condition. Giving up is what makes it permanent."

Marilyn Vos Savant

Joy is extremely attractive, so smile and laugh often. A smile makes you look better and gives you the sense of being open, inviting and approachable. (And you can buy smiles and sparkling eyes in SL, LOL.)

Don't try to please anyone but yourself - Let go of needing to please others and living as a servant.

Live your true colors, don't be a chameleon that changes for everyone else. Give because it feels good, and stop when it doesn't. Do what pleases you and your joy will give pleasure to others.

"When choosing between two evils, I always like to try the one I've never tried before."

Mae West (1892-1980)

Get comfortable with receiving attention. Never avoid wearing something eye-catching and bright (except at funerals).

Picture yourself in your desired reality. Then mold yourself into the life you desire. Allow yourself to be irresistibly attractive to all whom you desire.

List the facets of your desired reality so you don't forget anything.

Be passionate about what you want (this is contagious). Be grateful and feel

love, joy, abundance, and prosperity. You are worthy simply because you are. The Earth and starry sky value you unconditionally. You are the only one who questions your worth.

Trust how you feel - If it doesn't feel right, it usually isn't right for you.

Get out of your own way, and don't be an obstacle on your own path. Let go of stubbornness, righteousness, and the need to be right.

"Obstacles are those frightful things you

You must want what you desire more than you fear it.

blessed for those aspects you have achieved. Feel blessed for ANYTHING you have achieved or are.

"Half this game is ninety percent mental."

Yogi Berra

You must want what you desire more than you fear it, or else you may reject it, avoid it, deny it, repel it, or otherwise sabotage it.

Feel worthy of what you desire, and allow yourself to feel that you deserve

see when you take your eyes off your goal."

Henry Ford (1863-1947)

Change what isn't working - Change the patterns that create undesired aspects of your life. Change is the only constant in life, and resisting change causes pain, so choose to consciously direct change in your life by choosing the change that you desire.

Let your best be good enough for you. It's not gonna get any better.

Nothing in this world is perfect."

Richard J. Daley, 1902-1976

Always do your best, and don't waste effort competing and comparing. In doing your best, be sure to understand your limitations. (Remember *Dirty Harry*.)

"Sometimes it is not enough that we do our best; we must do what is required."
Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965)

Practice instantaneous forgiveness - Holding a grudge or holding onto pain only robs you of energy and perpetuates your pain and suffering. Above all, forgive yourself - Most people are harder on themselves than they would be on anyone else.

The past does not equal the future - Let go of past failure and disappointment.

You must act in order to attract, so work toward your desired goal.

"Never mistake motion for action."

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961)

Be the person you want to be with - Like attracts like, so go where you will find like-hearted like-minded people who are interested in the same things.

Connect - Any life is as much about whom you know as what you know. Be willing to say "yes" to life and the op-

portunities it presents.

Allow yourself to feel sensuous and sexy. Live life fully awake and alive.

So there you have my recipe for success in SL or RL. On the other hand, you could adopt Woody Allen's point of view:

"In my next life I want to live my life backwards. You start out dead and get that out of the way. Then you wake up in an old people's home feeling better every day. You get kicked out for being too healthy, go collect your pension, and then when you start work, you get a gold watch and a party on your first day. You work for 40 years until you're young enough to enjoy your retirement. You party, drink alcohol, and are generally promiscuous, then you are ready for high school. You then go to primary school, you become a kid, you play. You have no responsibilities, you become a baby until you are born. And then you spend your last 9 months floating in luxurious spa-like conditions with central heating and room service on tap, larger quarters every day and then, Voila! You finish off as an orgasm!"

HOWEVER, you will prolly not get to do this... So make the best of things...

TC ~ Gudrun

pure logic

(deductive reasoning 101)

by Catchtye
Rumpler



I don't know if everyone in the world feels the way I do about the essence of solitude. In fact, I doubt anyone does. But I think if they all gave it a little more thought they would, could, see the advantages of being alone with one's truest nature.....pure logic!

All the inner being that ever was, and is, comes out when you're by yourself. Alone with the only thing that really matters - - you. Some people couldn't handle the real person that resides in the very soul that they are born with. In fact, I think if confronted, they would run like hell. That's why they tend to create this facade they do, to try and emulate what they want others to perceive that they are.

On a rare occasion you might find someone who gets perilously close to the edge of reality that holds the raw and naked psyche of their inner being. But for most of us, it's just a pretty picture we like to look at and say we're doing well. A picture painted and shellacked with anything we can find to hide the pure white canvas that lurks beneath a palette of vibrant, life colors.

We all deny this statement with great pride. We all perceive ourselves to be exactly who we think we are. All that we are is directly due to years of grooming and training our brains to do precisely what we want. No wavering, no detours. Just pure control. Myself

included.

Being in control. Now there's a credo with some guts. It makes a statement. It says, " I am in command of all I do. I'm the boss. I am the emperor of my actions." Well, that's all fine and dandy if you're a machine operating under ideal conditions, monitored by high-powered computers making millions of calculations a second to keep your productivity pumping out like a bleeding artery. But in real life situations, I find a more ominous statement to be true. One that says, "Assess the situation and perform whatever actions that are deemed appropriate to achieve a result that is both successful and beneficial to yourself."

In layman's terms, I'm speaking of logic. Pure logic. The one thing that cannot be denied truth. In reality, pure logic is truth. It's the way things are, how they are going to be and how they must be. It doesn't care who gets hurt, or is in the way of the final solution. But to this I evoke the human blessing of compassion, which time and time again has ruined many a follower who stepped out of the bounds of pure logic - - done in by worrying about the feelings or rights of others. How can you expect to achieve the ultimate result by pondering whether or not the guy next door is going to be affected by your decision to poison his dog for taking an early morning whiz everyday on your

fifteen year old prize winning rose bush? To hell with him! Kill the dog, right?

That's pure logic. But for logic with a streak of compassion thrown in, I prefer the term...altered logic. This can give you optimal results without having that guy come over and slash the tires on your brand new Lincoln you've worked for all your life. No one wants to die on the operating table while being treated for massive internal injuries inflicted by a handy baseball bat. Altered logic gives you space to apply these conclusions to your thinking process.

avoid inflicting pain and suffering on others, such as just popping the dog on the butt with a bb gun for a few days. He may get a couple more rose bushes, but they grow back and your insurance company can breathe a sigh of relief that you avoided surgery.

In some situations, pure logic itself dictates that altered logic is not a viable option, as in the basic instinct of survival. And at times, this too can be pierced by an injection of compassion. Not totally giving up on purity, but a little less pure than what is needed. In some cases, this warping of purity can produce disastrous results. Even death.

Pure logic versus altered logic - the ultimate decision. One is absolute, the other is presented with compromise.

Pure logic versus altered logic - - the ultimate decision. One is absolute, the other is presented with compromise. One demands that you accept all consequences, the other gives you the option of lessening the consequences to a degree that your conscience can handle without experiencing overwhelming pangs of guilt. Replacing guilt with the idea that you did the best you could to

This death in the light of compassion infiltrating your pure logic is commonly referred to as heroism.

This is an act that defies all the rules of pure logic. Why people do this provides fertile ground for discussion, and could fill tomes on the subject by itself. But in honesty, I can't demean the act. God knows we're all grateful to the person who never let pure logic in,

and without regard to personal injury, saved our life or the life of a loved one. It's truly fascinating that a person could risk their own life for that of a perfect stranger. You think that another dog would have jumped in front of the bb gun to save him? I doubt it. But we will. Fascinating!

Solitude gives one the chance to apply logic of either kind to one's particular agenda to arrive at the ultimate decision. It can be done without the solitude, as is necessitated in matters of life and death, but outside influence can affect the process. As with heroism, if a person had the time, they might be able to think out the situation and arrive at a safer conclusion for both parties.

A phrase that comes to mind is "time to think about it." Call it what you will, it is and always will be, the solitude that you need to practice the fine art of logic! The gift of reason. A gift from the Gods! We should all try to use it a little more in



our lives, our work and most importantly, when a dog whizzes on our roses!

• r — e — z •



art by Les McClaine

Middleman by Crap Mariner

Everybody's always saying they're gonna cut out the middle man.

Who is the middle man?

Why is he in the middle?

What's he doing there?

If he was just getting in the way, why was he there in the first place?

Where do you learn how to be a middle man?

Middle school?

So, you want to cut him out?

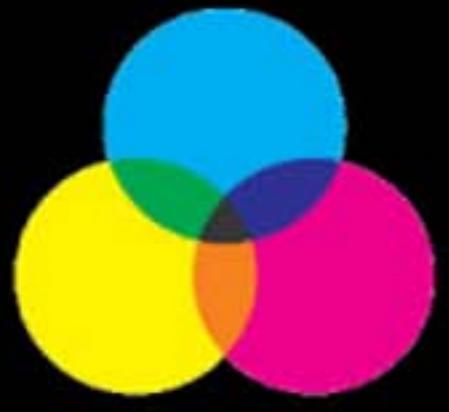
If he's not in the middle anymore, what's he going to do with his spare time?

I'd rather have him there in the middle, where I can see him. There's no way I'll turn my back to a guy like that.



The art of the feminine

SYNergy



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